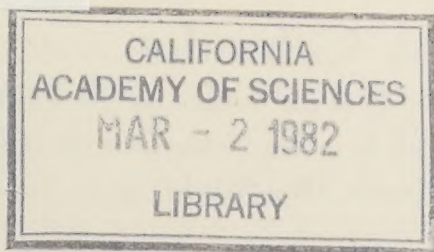


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Membership Meeting for March

The Nature Conservancy will show two films at our March general meeting. The first movie, "Forgotten Lands," describes the Nature Conservancy's current program to protect the eleven ecosystems most threatened with extinction in California. One of the highlights of this film is Ring Mountain in Tiburon, which has a high concentration of California wildflowers. Public field trips will be offered there in the near future.

After the film Donn Davy, a Nature Conservancy expert on California native wildflowers, will speak on the film's ecosystems and the endemic wildflowers found in each habitat.

Following Donn's talk a beautiful film on the Snake River Birds of Prey Natural Area in Idaho will be shown. This film shows the 65-mile stretch of spectacular canyons where large numbers of raptors nest.

The meeting will take place on **Thursday, March 18**, at 7:30 p.m., in the Golden Gate Room of the TraveLodge at the Wharf, 250 Beach St. (near Pier 39) in San Francisco. There is ample free parking available in the upper TraveLodge parking lot. The room is off the courtyard and swimming pool. Please join us on **March 18!**

—MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

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Field Trips Calendar

See the February *Gull* for details on the following trip:

Saturday, March 6—San Francisco Bird Blitz.

Wednesday, March 10—Mini-trip to Lafayette Reservoir. Meet at 9 a.m. Take Highway 24 to Acalanes Rd. exit and watch for sign to reservoir. There is a \$1 fee for day parking. We will see song and winter birds. Lunch optional. Rain cancels trip. Leaders: Delpha de Timofeev and Ruth Voss (525-8032).

Sunday, March 14—A two-mile walk to **Tennessee Cove**, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, to look for land and shorebirds, including White-throated Swifts. From San Francisco, take Hwy. 1 exit off Hwy. 101 toward the Mill Valley and Stinson Beach exit. In about one-quarter mile turn left into Tennessee Valley Rd. Meet at the end of the road at 9 a.m. Bring lunch. Leader: Betty Short (921-3020 work).

Saturday, March 20—Sunol Regional Park. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the park entrance. Take I-680 south, turn off at Calaveras Rd. (the freeway sign is marked Calaveras Rd., Dumbarton Bridge, Hwy. 84), go south and follow the signs to Sunol Park, about five miles. Bring lunch and liquids. (Park regulations prohibit alcoholic beverages.) We should see Golden Eagles, a variety of winter residents and early spring migrants. Leader: Peter Allen (981-7199). (✓)

Sunday, March 21—Coyote Hills Regional Park and San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge (SFBNWR). Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the visitors' center. From Hwy. 17 exit at Jarvis Ave., turn right at Newark Blvd., left on Patterson Ranch Rd. During the morning we will bird at Coyote Hills. After lunch we will caravan to the SFBNWR to see the exhibits at the visitors' center and look at birds in the adjoining area. Bring lunch, liquids and a scope if you have one. In case of rain please contact the leader: Paul Covell (530-2513). (✓)

Saturday & Sunday, March 27/28—Honey Lake. Call the leader for details. This trip is limited to 20 persons. Lodging is available in Susanville; primitive camping is also available in the area. We should see Sage Grouse, Bald Eagles, longspurs and other birds of the eastern Sierra. Leader: Tony Briggs (282-3142 or 626-3131). The latter number is an answering service so ask for Tony by name. (✓)

Sunday, April 4—Lake Merced, San Francisco. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the south end of Sunset Blvd. in the Lake Merced Circle. This is a good time to see wintering grebes and ducks and a few spring migrants. If you take the #72 bus be sure to get off at Ocean Ave. because the next stop is Winston Dr., about one-half mile away. Lunch is optional for this half-day trip. Leader: Naomi Svenningsen (584-6233). (✓)

Beginners' Trips

Saturday, March 13—Tilden Regional Park—Meet at 9 a.m. at the Nature Center parking lot. From I-80 take University Ave. until it ends at Oxford and turn left. Take Oxford to Rose and turn right. Proceed one block and turn left on Spruce. Cross Grizzly Peak Blvd. and immediately turn left downhill on Canon Dr. At the bottom of the hill turn left again to reach the Nature Center parking lot.

This field trip will concentrate on identifying birds of the chaparral, woodland and grassland areas of Tilden Park, Berkeley. We will see a variety of resident and breeding species and will listen for their sounds as an aid to identification. After lunch we may caravan to the Berkeley Marina. Bring binoculars and a field guide if you have them. Rain or serious threat of rain cancels trip. Leaders: Bob O'Brien and Robin Pulich (848-3594 evenings).

Sunday, April 4—Five Brooks, Bolinas Lagoon and Audubon Canyon Ranch. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Five Brooks parking lot (about three miles south of Olema on Hwy. 1). We will look for early spring migrants near the pond, then caravan to Audubon Canyon Ranch with stops along Bolinas Lagoon. Bring your lunch and we will picnic at the Ranch (\$1 contribution).

After lunch we'll walk up to the overlook to see the nesting herons and egrets. Bring binoculars and a field guide if you have them. Leader: Gloria Markowitz (892-2910). (✓)

Car pooling arrangements can be made for trips marked (✓). Call Kate Partridge at 524-9817 and leave a message. She will contact you.

Problems: If for any reason you have difficulty getting in touch with a field trip leader or need information regarding a trip, call Shirley Kelly (387-8290) or the GGAS office (843-2222).

—FIELD TRIPS COMMITTEE

January Observations — through January 27

This has been a winter of severe storms and relatively cold temperatures. The weather's effects are seen in various ways through the bird reports. The Big Storm of January 4 caused such flooding and mud flows that many coastal areas and all of Point Reyes have been inaccessible to birders. Many low-lying habitats, such as Olema Marsh, were devastated. The fate of birds usually found there is unknown. Some abnormal waterbird movements are directly attributable to the storms. A few northern waterbirds were unreported, but in cases such as Oldsquaw and Rock Sandpiper one assumes that the lack of coastal birding is largely responsible.

Very few summer insectivores both lingered and survived the harsh weather. Even many northern landbirds were surprisingly scarce. The

irruptions of Bohemian Waxwings, Northern Shrikes and winter finches apparently stopped in far northern California. Nevertheless, a few northern predators provided some real excitement.

As expected, storms are delaying the monthly Farallon reports and Dennis Serdehely's vacation forced postponement of the Monterey Bay reports.

WATERBIRDS

Two Yellow-billed Loons were found on Jan. 17, one in Monterey Bay (JL). The other has been seen inside and out of the Berkeley Marina to this writing (GH, JM, AG, WG, mob). Within our reporting area, the only group of Cattle Egrets reported were up to four on SE Farallon Nov. 22-Dec. 9 (PRBO) and up to seven on Chadbourne Rd. by Suisun Marsh during January (DB, *et al.*). An unusual concentration of diving birds was noted on Briones Reservoir Dec. 26. Several thousand scaups, Canvasbacks and coots were accompanied by a few Redheads and Buffleheads (FAP). A Tufted Duck was still at Muddy Hollow Jan. 3 (JG), the last day the area was accessible. Another male Tufted Duck was seen Jan. 1-16 (BDP, WT, JP, SN) at Lake Hennessey, where one visited two years ago. The male **Smew** continues to delight the birders it attracts to Foster City (mob).

A report of four **Wilson's Phalaropes** near the headquarters of the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Dec. 27, with two still there Jan. 3 (BR), is exceptionally late; there is only one winter record for northern California. Observers (SL, *et al.*) estimated **30,000** Red Phalaropes flying north past Año Nuevo during the hours just preceding the arrival of the Big Storm on that coast late Jan. 3. They were probably fleeing the impending onslaught. Several more Glaucous Gulls were reported. Almost all here are in first winter plumage. Singles visited SE Farallon Dec. 9 (PRBO) and Palo Alto Dec. 31 (BB) and Jan. 8 (BD). At the Davis Landfill a total of four Jan. 21-23 included a white individual and an **adult** (EB, mob).

PREDATORS

A light gray immature **Gyr Falcon** near Davis electrified the California birding network. The only previous state record was one collected at Tule Lake in 1948. First found when it attacked a falconer's Goshawk (!) Jan. 17, it was rediscovered Jan. 22 and seen at least through Jan. 27 (CA, SGH, EG, mob). As one would expect of a wild individual, but not necessarily an escaped captive, it seemed to ignore both people and the falconer's lure. In any case, the **Gyr Falcon** thrilled hundreds of birders as it harried pheasants.

Bald Eagles seem more numerous than usual. Besides those at Calaveras and Crystal Springs Reservoir, there were three reports from east-

ern Contra Costa and Alameda counties (DS, BR), including three south of Bethany Reservoir (DS). Suprisingly, I only heard about two Long-eared Owls in the entire area, both at Coyote Hills (mob, SFB). Also at Coyote Hills, the discovery again of a Saw-whet Owl roosting by the visitor center Jan. 16 (RA, SFB, mob) pleased many. It is amazing that only one Northern Shrike is known to be wintering in our area, continuing to be seen along the Yolo Bypass this month (JML, *et al.*).

SMALL LANDBIRDS

Considering this winter's weather, the Allen's Hummingbird in Alamo Jan. 13 (JR) was exceptionally early. The **Common Skylark** remained at Hall Ranch Jan. 3 (JG), the last day the area was accessible. On SE Farallon, the Bewick's Wren was still present Dec. 24 and a Sage Thrasher stayed until Dec. 7 (PRBO). In eastern Contra Costa County four Townsend's Solitaires were at Black Diamond Mines Jan. 2 (DT) and two more were at the Morgan Territory Regional Land Trust Jan. 25 (DS). Solitaires are relatively numerous this winter. Mountain Bluebirds normally winter in the Panoche area, but a single flock of 140 on Little Panoche Rd. Jan. 24 (RH, KY, MAS) is nevertheless impressive.

Among the few lingering warblers were two Black-and-whites: at San Francisco Zoo to Jan. 5 (HW) and at North Lake in Golden Gate Park about the same time (DM, *fide* AH). Did they survive later? In a severe winter Nashville Warblers are notable. One remained on SE Farallon to Nov. 22 and another visited Dec. 11 (PRBO). Another hardy Nashville Warbler was in Lincoln Park Jan. 15 (AH). The Hooded Oriole on SE Farallon remained until Dec. 7 (PRBO). A Northern Oriole at Stinson Gulch Jan. 16 (DT, JE, *et al.*) was rescribed as "probably pure Baltimore" type (JE). After a long hiatus both male (Jan. 14 - AG, WG) and female (Jan. 16 - JRO) **Great-tailed Grackles** were refound at San Francisco Aquatic Park.

The previously-reported Summer Tanager ate semi-dormant honey bees at San Francisco Zoo and was also seen at Lake Merced during January (HW). A Western Tanager was also at the Zoo Jan. 1 (HW). A male Lazuli Bunting visiting a feeder in Sacramento during mid-January constituted the first winter record for California. Up to three Sharp-tailed Sparrows were seen during January's high tides at Palo Alto Baylands Refuge (mob). A Swamp Sparrow was also there Jan. 9-16 (JG).

Errata: Readers who use these Observations for reference will want to boldface or underline last month's **Smew**, page 22. Also page 23, "Single-tailed Sparrows" should be "Single Sharp-tailed Sparrows."

Observers: Roger Alexander, Chris Asay, Stephen F. Bailey, Neil Blank, Eric Blom, Bill Bousman, Dennis Bromley, Nancy Conzett, Bob

Dyer, Jules Evens, Al Ghiorso, Wilma Ghiorso, Ed Greaves, Jeff Greenhouse, Rob Hanson, Steven G. Herman, Alan Hopkins, George Hugenberg, Jeri M. Langham, Steve Layman, John Luther, Jack Mann, Harriet Minear, many observers (mob), Joseph Morlan (JM), Dan Murphy, Steve Nicolas, Point Reyes Bird Observatory (Farallon report thanks to Teya McElroy), Benjamin D. Parmeter, John Parmeter, Frank A. Pitelka, Bob Richmond, Jean Richmond (JR), Tony Rockwell, Jim Rosso (JRo), Don Schmoldt, Marin Audubon Society, Wayne Tillay, Dorothy Tobkin, Sandy Upson, Harry White, Keiko Yamane.

—STEPHEN F. BAILEY, *Observations Editor*
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1981 Oakland Christmas Bird Census

This was a particularly good count from the standpoint of showing a good sample winter population of birds. Almost every one of the "missables" was accounted for. The most notable exception was the small owl group. The rain made location of them almost impossible. They were located for count week, however, and so are listed in the report to *American Birds*. The best find was the first count record of the Pygmy Nuthatch. There have been several reports during the last seven years that indicated the Pygmy Nuthatch had extended its range into the East Bay, but this is the first confirmed sighting for the count. Thanks to Mike Green, *et al.*, for a very special sighting.

Here are the figures for 1981: Common Loon 42, Arctic Loon 5, Red-throated Loon 28, Red-necked Grebe 2, Horned Grebe 600, Eared Grebe 81, Western Grebe 1000, Pied-billed Grebe 142, **Brown Pelican 105**, Double-crested Cormorant 900, Brandt's Cormorant 58, Pelagic Cormorant 85, Great Blue Heron 53, Green Heron 5, Great Egret 100, Snowy Egret 160, Black-crowned Night Heron 58, Canada Goose 900, Mallard 900, Pintail 500, Green-winged Teal 127, Cinnamon Teal 11, Eurasian Wigeon 1, American Wigeon 1100, Northern Shoveler 600, **Redhead 101**, Ring-necked Duck 200, Canvas-back 1900, Greater Scaup 3200, Lesser Scaup 4800, Barrow's Golden-eye 14, Bufflehead 650, **White-winged Scoter 300**, Surf Scoter 6600, Black Scoter 2, Ruddy Duck 3600, Hooded Merganser 4, Common Merganser 4, Red-breasted Merganser 119.

Turkey Vulture 131, White-tailed Kite 24, Sharp-shinned Hawk 40, Cooper's Hawk 10, Red-tailed Hawk 122, Golden Eagle adult 4, juvenal 1, Northern Harrier 13, Merlin 1, Kestrel 101, California Quail 400, Ring-necked Pheasant 17, Clapper Rail 33, Sora 1, American Coot 5100, Semipalmated Plover 275, Snowy Plover 39, Killdeer 383, Black-bellied Plover

1100, Ruddy Turnstone 44, Black Turnstone 100, Common Snipe 14, Long-billed Curlew 41, Whimbrel 11, Spotted Sandpiper 11, Willet 2100, Greater Yellowlegs 12, Knot 6, Least Sandpiper 400, Dunlin 7000, Short-billed Dowitcher 97, Long-billed Dowitcher 250, Western Sandpiper 7900, Marbled Godwit 1100, Sanderling 1900, American Avocet 800, Black-necked Stilt 39, Glaucous-winged Gull 2800, Western Gull 4000, Herring Gull 350, Thayer's Gull 38, California Gull 2100, Ring-billed Gull 1800, Mew Gull 600, Bonaparte's Gull 215, Heermann's Gull 2, Forster's Tern 146.

Band-tailed Pigeon 563, Rock Dove 1500, Mourning Dove 1400, Barn Owl 1, Screech Owl-missed, Great Horned Owl 19, Pygmy Owl-missed, Burrowing Owl 8, Short-eared Owl 3, Saw-whet Owl-missed, Anna's Hummingbird 313, Belted Kingfisher 15, "Yellow-shafted" Flicker 1, "Red-shafted" Flicker 512, Acorn Woodpecker 7, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 8, Hairy Woodpecker 4, Downy Woodpecker 27, Nuttall's Woodpecker 25, Black Phoebe 70, Say's Phoebe 21, Horned Lark 16, Steller's Jay 400, Scrub Jay 700, Northern Raven 1, American Crow 115, Chestnut-backed Chickadee 651, Plain Titmouse 148, Common Bushtit 1700, White-breasted Nuthatch 22, Red-breasted Nuthatch 62, Brown Creeper 30, Wrentit 328, Winter Wren 26, Bewick's Wren 84, Marsh Wren 8, Rock Wren 1, Northern Mockingbird 74, California Thrasher 34, American Robin 17,600, Varied Thrush 250, Hermit Thrush 175, Western Bluebird 192, Golden-crowned Kinglet 350, Ruby-crowned Kinglet 750, Water Pipit 92, Cedar Waxwing 4100, Loggerhead Shrike 21, Eurasian Starling 10,100, Hutton's Vireo 30, "Myrtle" Warbler 225, "Audubon's" Warbler 175, Townsend's Warbler 19, Common Yellow-throat 2, House Sparrow 550, Western Meadowlark 650, Red-winged Blackbird 850, Tricolored Blackbird 92, Brewer's Blackbird 3800, Brown-headed Cowbird 44, Purple Finch 35, House Finch 1700, Pine Siskin 1100, American Goldfinch 350, Lesser Goldfinch 400, Rufous-sided Towhee 231, Brown Towhee 800, Savannah Sparrow 44, Lark Sparrow-missed, Rufous-crowned Sparrow 4, "Slate-colored" Junco 14, "Oregon" Junco 2500, White-crowned Sparrow 1700, Golden-crowned Sparrow 1800, White-throated Sparrow 8, Fox Sparrow 300, Lincoln's Sparrow 8, Song Sparrow 297.

Plus the following unidentifiable birds: Scaup sp. 8100, Scoter sp. 1000, Accipiter sp. 7, Sandpiper sp. 170, Dowitcher sp. 2000, Gull sp. 4800, undifferentiated Yellow-rumped Warblers 500, Zonotrichia Sparrows 8.

One cautious observer listed 8 female Goldeneyes, not being willing to assume they were Common. We need as many such responsible observers as we can get. Several rarities were sighted, the most significant of which was Mike Green's Pygmy Nuthatch because it indicates a range expansion and not just a mere rarity. Other notables included a

Glaucous Gull, a White-fronted Goose, an Oldsquaw, a Wandering Tattler, an Orange-crowned Warbler, 3 Common Gallinules, 19 Gadwall, 26 White Pelican, 6 Wood Duck, an Osprey, 3 White-throated Swifts and a female Williamson's Sapsucker.

There was a possible Common Tern but the observer was not able to get a clear look at the tail, which in the mature bird is the deciding factor.

All in all a most satisfactory count. Thanks to one and all and as they say in sports: "Wait 'til next year!"

—DOUG GOMKE, *Compiler*

Conservation Notes

CLEAN AIR ACT

A few representatives have introduced a "Dirty Air" Bill to undermine the Clean Air Act. If passed, HR 5252 would sentence millions of Americans to unhealthy air and increase the problems caused by acid rain. HR 5252 would negatively affect the Non-Attainment program by unnecessarily extending the deadlines for cleaning up unhealthy air and by dropping the requirement that new factories in unhealthy areas use the best clean-up technology available.

The bill would cripple the Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) program by allowing more pollution in areas that currently have air cleaner than the minimum required under the national health standards. It would lower the requirement that new factories in clean air areas be built with the best pollution control methods.

HR 5252 would increase automobile pollution by doubling allowable emissions of carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxide and limiting the EPA's ability to insure that cars meet even these less strict standards. Finally, it wouldn't improve controls of pollutants that cause cancer and it would not address the acid rain problem.

On the brighter side, to fight acid rain, Senate Bill 1706 and House Bill 4829 both call for a 10 million-ton reduction in sulfur dioxide emissions by 1990 in 31 eastern states. House Resolution 252 expresses the commitment of the House of Representatives to a strong Clean Air Act.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PROTECT THE QUALITY OF AIR: Write to Senator Cranston and Senator Hayakawa (U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510) and ask them to oppose *any* legislation which would cripple the Clean Air Act. Urge them to support SB 1706.

State Legislation

On the state level, SB 33 is a bill which would require annual inspection and maintenance of motor vehicles in areas which exceed federal air quality standards for ozone. This bill would reduce hydrocarbon emis-

sions by 45 tons per day and reduce carbon monoxide emissions by 455 tons per day in the Bay Area. These reductions would improve air quality and enable the Bay Area to meet the federal air quality standards for ozone and carbon monoxide by the 1987 statutory deadlines. To help insure SB 33's success write the Senator and Assemblyman in your district and urge them to support this environmentally sound bill. (State Capitol, Sacramento, CA 95824)

—ANDREA KIESERMAN, *for the Conservation Committee*

PERIPHERAL CANAL

(First of a series of three articles)

"Stop the canal" is a phrase that is gaining battlecry intensity as the June, 1982, election draws closer. A bill dubbed SB 200 has been placed on the ballot which, if passed, will approve a canal to be constructed around the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The 43-mile-long, 400-foot-wide, 30-foot-deep canal would make possible diversion of 70 percent of the Sacramento River from north of the Delta through open canal, siphons and pumping stations to the California Aqueduct which starts near Tracy. From there it would travel to farms in the lower San Joaquin Valley and over the Tehachapi Mountains to the Los Angeles Basin.

The GGAS Board has adopted a resolution reaffirming its opposition to SB 200 and to any other measures which would authorize peripheral canal construction. In this and two subsequent articles, the issues in support of that resolution will be presented.

The Delta and the Bay waters are dependent upon seasonal flushing actions of water runoff which would be captured and controlled by the canal and two new major reservoirs. Year around, the balance of salt and fresh water in the Delta is sensitive, potentially affecting thousands of acres of farmland and millions of dollars in productivity potential.

Proposition 8, passed by the voters in November, 1980, has guarantees of water quality, prohibitions against damming the North Coastal wild rivers for water export and requirements which would preserve historic levels of fish and wildlife. A big "however" regarding the entire proposition is that it can be changed by a 2/3 majority of the legislature. Southern California already controls that many votes. Once the capacity to transport the northern rivers is in place (Peripheral Canal) all that would be needed would be the pressure of growth, development and demand.

Water releases from the Peripheral Canal to preserve Delta quality would depend on who has the votes in Sacramento, despite the present statutory and regulatory guarantees. At best, the potential effects on fish and wildlife in the Delta are unknown. Proposed fish screens at the intake site are untested. Present habitat for migratory and breeding birds could be seriously endangered and the viability of the Suisun Marsh could be permanently damaged.

Existing diversions by the Water Project are impacting the Delta. Its ecology is too delicate to subject to further experiment and possible mismanagement. There is too great a potential that current problems would be replaced by much greater ones in the Delta area.

—PAUL GREEN, *Conservation Committee*

AN END TO THE ENDANGERED SPECIES?

This spring Congress will be reconsidering the Endangered Species Act. This law which was first enacted in the early '70s will expire unless it is renewed. During reauthorization, every provision of the act is subject to change and anti-conservation groups in Washington will be lobbying Congress to weaken it. Already there are indications that a major effort will be made to remove protection of all plants and invertebrates.

The National Audubon Society is joining forces with more than 25 other conservation groups to fight for a strong Endangered Species Act. Their success in swaying Congress depends on grassroots support across the country. The GGAS will be devoting its April general membership meeting to endangered species.

We need help to save the Endangered Species Act. If you would like to receive more information or volunteer some of your time, please call one of the following: Jerry Emory, 527-8119; David Foote, 841-2297; Peggy Klenz, 845-8974.

—*Endangered Species Subcommittee*

Farallon Island Trips

GGAS will sponsor boat trips to circle the Farallon Islands on successive Sundays, May 2, 9 and 16. We will have an opportunity to view nesting and migratory seabirds, many of which are sighted only occasionally from the mainland. Past trips have produced sightings of Tufted Puffins, Shearwaters, Albatross and several species of marine mammals.

Reservations can be made by sending \$21 per person with a self-addressed, stamped envelope to GGAS, 2718 Telegraph Ave., #206, Berkeley, CA 94705. Checks should be made payable to GGAS. Space for the trip is limited and will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. We plan an early morning departure from Emeryville Marina.

Farallon Islands

Scattered in a line seven miles long, the islands lie due south of Point Reyes and 25 miles southwest of San Francisco. They comprise 120 acres of granite sculptured by the wind and sea to inlets, ridges, stacks, arches and cliffs that descend precipitously to the ocean. To early Spanish explorers and merchants of the Manila galleons these rocky islands and

islets were los Farallones do los Frayles. To Sir Francis Drake who ventured ashore in 1597 they were the Islands of St. James. Today's charts and maps mark them as the Farallones.

Adventurer, traveler and author Charles Nordhoff stopped at the islands in 1874. Reflecting on this visit he wrote: "Except the Rock of Tristan d'Acunha in the Southern Atlantic, I have never seen an inhabited spot which seems so utterly desolate, so entirely separated . . . whose people appear to have such a slender hold on the world." Little has transpired since that would cause Nordhoff to change his observation.

Local fishermen and the seamen who crew the great ships bound for San Francisco find this barren jumble of crags forbidding and lifeless. A naturalist sees them with a different eye; for these patches of rock host the largest seabird breeding colonies in the contiguous United States. In the coves and along the rocky shore hundreds of sea lions and seals gather and during certain seasons the near waters abound with whale and dolphin.

Man has been harsh in his treatment of the wildlife of these islands. Nineteenth century hunters slaughtered seals for oil, fur and meat. During the California gold rush the highly palatable eggs of the Common Murre brought fabulous prices in San Francisco, resulting in an annual plunder of the rookeries which seriously depleted populations. Twentieth century oil pollution further contributed to the destruction of birds and marine mammals. But organizations such as the American Ornithological Union and the Audubon Society of the Pacific began to work for the island's protection. The culmination of years of effort came in 1969 when the Farallon National Wildlife Refuge was established. Under the stewardship of the Point Reyes Observatory and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service the island's wildlife is rapidly recovering from years of abuse. Each year the mark of man is less in evidence and today's visitor will experience islands remote from civilization's devices.

Three organizations offering regular spring excursions to the islands are:

Point Reyes Bird Observatory	Marin Adventures	Golden Gate Audubon Society
Box 321	c/o Marin Community	2718 Telegraph Ave.
Bolinas, CA 94924	College District	Berkeley, CA 94705
	Kentfield, CA 94904	

Trips are usually moderately priced with reservations filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Excursions do not dock at the islands because access is restricted and landing difficult. This is not a disadvantage, however; the breeding colonies are easily seen from the oceanside.

Trip participants should plan to take lunch, dress warmly and take rain gear and waterproof footwear. Even though you may sail under sunny skies, rough seas frequently result in heavy spray and cause the decks to run with water.

As the boat leaves the dock and pushes through the calm bay waters

you'll see Common and Red-throated Loon; Surf and White-winged Scoter; Double-crested Cormorant; Western Grebe and Red-breasted Merganser. Overhead will be Caspian and Forster's Tern; Mew, Bonaparte's, Western, California and Glaucous-winged Gulls. Passing through the Golden Gate lines of east-bound cormorants may be encountered. These cormorants are birds of the outer coast and of the Farallones that move into the bay each morning to feed.

The beautiful Point Bonito lighthouse marks the last bay headlands. In the open water beyond, Arctic Loon and small flocks of Northern and Red Phalarope pass in northbound migration. Sooty Shearwater skim the surface and arc across the horizon. Northern Fulmar and Black-legged Kittiwake are of irregular occurrence and may be seen in great numbers or not at all. Occasionally Parasitic Jaeger, Manx Shearwater or Xantus Murrelet are encountered.

Spring is the season of the Vellella or By-the-wind-sailor. In some years these small coelenterates with their curious cellophane-like sails are encountered in the millions and form large rafts or long windrows on the water. Be alert for Gray Whale or Harbor Porpoise. Blue Sharks may lie just below the surface exposing their dorsal fins. Close to the Farallones the seldom seen Great White Shark occurs and is identified by its large size and notched caudal fin.

The three hour trip ends in Fisherman's Bay on the north side of the southernmost island. This small island cove teems with life. Pigeon Guillemot dart past emitting their high-pitched whistled cry. Pelagic and Brandt's Cormorant, many with nesting materials, criss-cross the inlet. Scattered along the shore are nests of Western Gulls. With a little searching you'll spot brightly colored Tufted Puffin sitting at burrow entrances. California and Stellar Sea Lion rest on the rocky shore while Elephant Seal occupy small sandy beaches. At the water's edge expect Wandering Tattler, Black Oystercatcher and Black and Ruddy Turnstone.

As the boat moves out of Fisherman's Bay and begins a circuit of the islands you'll drift along the sheltered east side. Rhinoceros and Cassin's Auklet may be seen in these relatively calm waters. Eared Grebe often pause here during their migration and large flocks may be present within a few yards of shore. The echoing cries of nesting murre come from two giant sea caves. Aurelia, the moon jellyfish, or more commonly the delicate gold-brown Chrysaora may be suspended just below the water's surface. The flat at the island's southeast end is a favored hauling out area for Harbor Seal and as many as a dozen may be seen at low tide. Your boat leader may point out the rusted anchor on the shore that is all that remains of the German ship *Bremen* that struck the island and

sank in October, 1885. The wreck was much lamented along San Francisco's waterfront because this schooner was inbound with a cargo of liquor for the saloons of the Barbary Coast.

The water is rough and the wind stiff on the island's north and west sides, causing a cautious boat captain to stand well offshore. Here on the windward side the swells that pass beneath you race to the island, curling spindrift from their tops as they approach and finally crash against the rocky cliffs. Scan these cliffs with binoculars. Pay particular attention to the top of the great arch. Murres by the tens of thousands seem to occupy every available spot.

Seven miles west of the Farallones the ocean floor slopes sharply. This marks the edge of the continental shelf. Over the edge and beyond, in deeper water, environmental changes imperceptible to human senses occur. Oceanographers know this as the Farallones *Escarpment* and it is the last area you will visit before returning to the Golden Gate. Pelagic species not frequently seen closer to shore are in evidence. Black-footed Albatross, Pink-footed Shearwater, Pomarine Jaeger, Arctic Tern and Sabine's Gull are among bird species frequently seen. Excursions also report Hump-backed Whale, Killer Whale and Dall Porpoise. Within the past few years sightings of Northern Fur Seal have become increasingly common.

Thus is a typical spring pelagic trip to the Farallon Islands. The trip you take may differ in detail from the one described because of reports of recent sightings, weather conditions or the judgment of the leader. But whatever course is taken, you'll soon find that the rugged cliffs, thundering sea caves, contentious sea lions and myriad birds cast a spell that lingers long after the return to shore.

—PETER WHITE

Back Yard Birder

As defined by Webster, a foot is the extreme end of the lower limbs below the ankle. How much more this means to a bird!

The legs and feet of birds are covered with scales. The arrangement of the scales is always the same on all members of any species and is often similar in closely related species, genera and families. Therefore, scutellation is sometimes used as a taxonomic characteristic.

Over eons, different species have adapted the foot for purposes which allow that group to occupy a specific niche in the scheme of things. The basic four toes are arranged differently in various families for the purposes of perching, swimming, climbing, walking on different surfaces or running.

Perching birds have three toes in front and one long toe behind. When the bird bends its leg upon landing on a limb, the tendon in the rear toe is shortened and locks into a closed position.

Nearly all swimming birds use their webbed feet to propel them. Loons and grebes paddle both feet at once; ducks alternately paddle the left foot, then the right. Penguins "fly" underwater, using their wings to drive themselves through the water.

Marsh birds have long toes to support them on mud. Jacanas have even longer toes which allow them to step atop lily pads as they feed upon insects. The Ptarmigan grows feathers alongside its toes which double the foot size in winter, enabling the bird to negotiate in deep snow as if on snowshoes. By springtime, when their usefulness is no longer important, these feathers have been worn down by scratching for vegetation in the snow.

Woodpeckers have developed a foot with two toes pointing forward and two backward for support. Aided by stiff tail feathers, the woodpecker can manage the most perpendicular object.

Feeding habits also determine special characteristics of feet. Owls and other raptors have rope-like tendons which run through grooves behind the knees so that when a leg is bent the powerful claws are automatically closed. As the owl swoops silently down and grabs a mouse, the legs are pushed up against the bird's body and the talons grasp the mouse without conscious effort. The Osprey, which plummets into the sea for fish, shares this mechanism. This can backfire occasionally. An Osprey choosing a fish too heavy to carry off can be dragged under water by the weight of the fish and may drown before unlocking his talons. Osprey not only have this grasping ability, but have developed feet with rough, scaly soles to assist in holding a slippery fish.

Although you may not be close enough to observe birds' feet, you can see that feet have become specifically adapted and can be useful in identification.

—MEG PAULETICH

Gathering of Bird Paraphernalia

Learn about field guides, binoculars, telescopes, cameras, lenses and tape recorders. Compare, swap tips and share information about the best (and worst) birding aids. Bring your own birding gear and books. Location: Richardson Bay Sanctuary. This program will be co-sponsored by Point Reyes Bird Observatory and the Western Education Center. March 21, Sunday from 1 to 4 p.m. Free. 376 Greenwood Beach Rd., Tiburon.

Bay Cruise Benefit for Mono Lake

Help save Mono Lake and enjoy good company while seeing the Bay from the Bay! Sunday, April 18, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., has been set for a cruise into regions of the north bay to see and learn about the history, geography and wildlife of these important areas and to get an update on the Mono Lake ultra-crisis. We'll have on board with us experts in the fields of ornithology, marine mammalogy, estuarine ecology and S.F. Bay geography. Boarding time is 8:30 a.m. at the Berkeley Marina (foot of University Ave.) and return will be at 5 p.m. Bring lunch, binoculars, camera and warm clothes. The trip goes rain or shine. Sandwiches and snack items may be purchased on board. Alcoholic beverages may not be brought on board, but may be purchased there. Tickets are \$31 if obtained on or before March 27. After that date they will be \$34—*so be an early bird!* Tickets are not refundable. Reservations are by mail only. Make checks payable to Mono Lake Committee (not tax deductible) or to Golden Gate Audubon Society (tax deductible) earmarked for MLC. Send your check with a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: BAY CRUISE, GGAS, 2718 Telegraph Ave., #206, Berkeley, CA 94705. If you have questions, please phone Chris Swarth at 849-2053, evenings.

Cooper Society Meeting

On Monday, March 8, the Northern Chapter of the Cooper Ornithological Society is pleased to welcome Scott Hatch of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, UC Berkeley, who will present a talk entitled "Timing of breeding and breeding success in a recently expanded population of Black-legged Kittiwake."

Scott has studied seabirds all over Alaska and is one of the world's foremost authorities on the distribution and ecology of these birds. The talk will begin at 8 p.m. in Room 2503 Life Sciences Building, UC Berkeley, preceded by a business meeting at 7:30 p.m. His presentation promises to be stimulating and informative and all people interested in birds are encouraged to attend.

Sea to Sierra Workshops

A post-Asilomar workshop following the National Audubon Society's Western Regional Conference and two one-week summer workshops are being offered by the NAS' Western Education Center. These trips, focusing on issues across the state, are being offered in cooperation with Yosemite Institute and make use of their facilities in the San Francisco area and at Yosemite.

The workshops start at Yosemite Institute's Headlands Campus in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. National Audubon and Yosemite Institute staff will be leading the workshops; there will be several talks

by guest speakers. The first part of the week will be spent visiting sites dealing with prime agricultural land, the politics and philosophy of agriculture and the challenges of an urban environment. Time will also be spent on the natural history of the area and enjoying a night out in San Francisco.

Midweek, the group will spend the day crossing California to Yosemite, including a transect of the Delta with a focus on water issues and a visit to a wildlife refuge. In Yosemite National Park, the group will stay at Yosemite Institute's Crane Flat campus. There will be an opportunity to study some of the Sierran streams proposed for low head hydro development and discussions of the wilderness ethic and the problems facing wilderness. The trip will culminate with dinner at the Ahwahnee Hotel in Yosemite Valley, returning to the Bay Area the following day.

The post-Asilomar workshop is Tuesday, April 6, through Sunday, April 11, and costs \$275 per person. The summer workshops, one week each, July 25 to 31 and August 1 to 7, will include additional time studying the ecology of San Francisco Bay and a trip to Mono Lake; the fee is \$350 per person. Accommodations are dormitory style, towels and sleeping bags to be provided by participants. There is excellent food at both facilities. One or two units of credit is available at \$40 per unit.

For more information and an extensive itinerary, contact the Western Education Center, 376 Greenwood Beach Rd., Tiburon, CA 94920.

New Course Offerings

"Natural Excursions" is a new, joint education program offered by Audubon's Western Education Center in cooperation with the Point Reyes Bird Observatory. These are outstanding birding and natural history courses with a strong emphasis on current issues. The instructors are recognized for planning exciting, well-organized excursions with educational depth and conservation import.

The excursions include trips to Hawaii, Alaska and Mexico, with a specialization on California and the West.

For further information and a brochure, write the Western Education Center, 376 Greenwood Beach Rd., Tiburon, CA 94920.

Point Reyes Field Seminars

This spring Point Reyes Field Seminars will again offer a wide selection of field-oriented and in-depth seminars on birds at Point Reyes National Seashore. All are instructed by recognized professionals.

Owls of Point Reyes, March 6 or 7, Bob Stewart

Bird Watching for Beginners, March 13-14, David Winkler

Spring Birds: Migrants and Breeders, May 22-23, Jules Evens

Breeding Birds, June 5-6, Bob Stewart

Workshop on Bird Song, June 12-13, Bob Stewart

For information on fees, meeting places and/or our brochure, call (415) 663-1200.

Spring Birding Classes in Albany

Dr. Stephen F. Bailey will teach two courses, sponsored by GGAS, at the Albany Adult School. Each will introduce about fifty species of landbirds.

Spring Migrant Landbirds covers those species that migrate to or through the Bay Area during spring. Slide lectures will meet 7-9 p.m. on three Wednesday evenings (March 24, April 14 and April 28). There will be two six-hour Saturday field trips to observe the birds.

Mojave Desert and Oasis Landbirds includes resident and migrant landbirds found in the Mojave Desert or its rich riparian and palm oases. Slide lectures will meet 7-9 p.m. on three Wednesday evenings (March 31, April 21 and May 5). An optional, privately-sponsored weekend trip to these areas will be available through the instructor. We will bird Morongo Valley, Joshua Tree National Monument and other choice areas on April 24-25. As Bay Area migrants will be abundant, but are covered only in the Spring Migrant Landbirds class, **both classes** are strongly recommended for those interested in the desert trip.

For more information, call Steve at 548-9507. To register call the Albany Adult School at 526-6811, or attend the first class meeting.

San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge

The Interpretive Center of San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge offers a wide variety of exhibits, workshops, guided walks and films. It is located next to the Dumbarton Bridge toll plaza on Hwy. 84 in Fremont. Open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Naturalists lead activities on Saturdays and Sundays at 10 a.m., 1:30 and 3 p.m. No charge. For up-to-date recorded program information, call (415) 792-3178.

NATIONAL WILDLIFE WEEK ACTIVITIES

San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge will be celebrating "We Care About Eagles" week with two weekends of seminars on raptors, March 13-14 and 20-21. Topics covered will include banding demonstrations, current status and history of pesticide use, raptor rehabilitation, raptor research and release programs, falconry exhibitions, live animal demonstrations, refuge van tours and more. Activities will be suited to a variety of age groups and technical knowledge levels. Phone (415) 792-0222 to obtain the week's schedule of events.

The GGAS Library

Did you realize that the GGAS Office has a library filled with books on birds (of course), wildlife refuges, camping areas, biology and also has magazines, journals and scientific publications? Not only that but we have a new librarian, Christine Jones, who will be using her expertise and knowledge to convert the library from the Dewey Decimal system to the Library of Congress cataloguing system. If you are interested in helping to recatalogue the library call the GGAS Office (843-2222). Stop by the office if you are in the neighborhood and borrow a book!

Farewell, Hail and All That Rot

With this issue I pass over my big blue pencil to Don Sanford who was the first of several people good enough to answer my plea for a new editor. Don has recently retired after working in local government in both Contra Costa and Marin counties and seems to me to bring an aura of competence and organization to his newly chosen task which make me feel *The Gull* will be in good hands.

I want to thank everyone who has contributed articles and monthly columns during my tenure. Special kudos should go to Steve Bailey who has produced the excellent Observations column since October, 1978, probably putting in as much or more time some months organizing data and writing than I did producing the entire issue. Fanya Carter has proofread almost every *Gull* since I took over in late 1977 and her keen eye and judgment have been invaluable. Luckily for us all, she has agreed to stay on to assist Don.

Finally, I want to thank the people who were there to answer my (occasionally) dumb questions and the people who perked my (occasionally) sagging spirits at the right times by saying they enjoyed what they read in the publication. With very few exceptions, I have thoroughly enjoyed being your editor and know that I have learned things and become acquainted with people I would never otherwise have had the opportunity to meet.

Welcome, Don. May all your deadlines be met and your frustrations be bird-sized.

—NANCY CONZETT

Margaret Patrick Macormack

Many friends and members of Golden Gate Audubon Society mourn the passing of Mrs. Margaret (Pat) Macormack on January 3, 1982. She was one of the oldest members of the chapter, working with devotion for its many causes. Audubon Canyon Ranch was especially dear to her and recently Mono Lake also had become a major cause for her. We will miss her lively presence and dedication to conservation and nature study.

GIFTS AND BEQUESTS

For GGAS

Gift of

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In memory of

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The Society welcomes gifts in general or gifts in honor or in memory of relatives and friends. Such gifts will be used as specified by the donor or, if unspecified, at the discretion of the GGAS Board of Directors. This includes their use for general GGAS activities or for special programs of the Society including Audubon Canyon Ranch of which GGAS is a sponsor. Please send your gift in the form of a check made out to the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. to Minnie Groshong, Corresponding Secretary, Golden Gate Audubon Society, 2718 Telegraph Ave., #206, Berkeley, CA 94705-1179. All gifts are tax deductible. The Society is also appreciative of any bequests. Such bequests should specify as recipient the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. All gifts, donations and bequests will be acknowledged in *The Gull* as well as personally on behalf of the Society by the Corresponding Secretary.



Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc.
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THE GULL

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The Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. was established January 25, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948.

***The Gull* deadline is the first of the month for the following month.**

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